

**BOARD OF REGENTS  
STATE OF IOWA****AGENDA ITEM EDU4  
FEBRUARY 6-7, 2012****Contact: Diana Gonzalez****MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND DOCTOR OF  
AUDIOLOGY PROGRAM IN AUDIOLOGY ACCREDITATION REPORT  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa for the Master of Arts Program in Speech-Language Pathology and the Doctor of Audiology Program in Audiology.

**Executive Summary:** The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences offers two degree programs that are accredited – Master of Arts Program in Speech-Language Pathology and Clinical Doctorate of Audiology in Audiology. Both programs (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the criteria defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. In August 2011, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders was informed that the two programs were accredited for the maximum period of eight years with an interim report due in August 2012 addressing the development of a policy related to English proficiency and all other performance expectations.

This report addresses the Board's Strategic Plan priority to provide "educational excellence and impact."

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description.** The mission of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to be the premier institution for training, research, clinical service, and outreach in the field of communication sciences and disorders.

Its values include sharing knowledge and understanding with students, patients and their families, the general public, and collaborating colleagues in clinical practice and academia; advancing scientific knowledge of communication sciences and disorders through basic and clinical research; providing the highest quality of ethical clinical care to the people of Iowa and others; fostering a positive environment that protects free expression of thought and encourages honesty, openness, and integrity; adhering to the highest criteria of professional and scholarly ethics; and diligently working together as a team, supporting and encouraging one another, and rewarding teaching others.

- ⇒ **Master of Arts (M.A.) Program in Speech-Language Pathology** educates graduate students for clinical services in speech-language pathology, preparing them to meet national standards and Iowa licensure requirements. The program usually takes two years plus a summer to complete. Students are encouraged to write a thesis for the degree, although a non-thesis option is available. Students may elect to take further didactic and practicum courses which allow them to become certified for work in the public schools.

There is a critical need for speech pathologists in Iowa public schools and the program is working with the Iowa Department of Education to relieve that shortage. Students may also find employment in hospitals or other clinical settings. At the time of the site visit, there were 54 graduate students in the M.A. program.

- ⇒ **Doctor of Audiology (AudD) Program in Audiology** requires a total of 95 semester hours which students complete over four years. The program includes didactic coursework and extensive clinical training, including a one-year off-site externship. The program provides students the training needed to function as an audiologist in any clinical setting. Students may also take the didactic and practicum courses needed to work in the public school setting.

The University of Iowa is the only post-secondary institution in Iowa that offers the AudD degree and its graduates are highly sought after. At the time of the site visit, there were 27 students in the AudD program.

- ◇ Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation. To employers, graduate schools, and licensure, certification, and registration boards, graduation from an accredited program signifies adequate preparation for entry into the profession. In fact, many of these groups require graduation from an accredited program as a minimum qualification.
- ◇ Accrediting Agency. The accrediting body is the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. Both the professional Master's program and the Clinical Doctoral program in audiology were reviewed during the accreditation process. The Ph.D. program in Speech and Hearing Science was not part of the accreditation process.
- ◇ Review Process. The self-study prepared by the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders contained the responses to the criteria required by the accrediting body – Administrative Structure and Governance; Faculty; Curriculum (Academic and Clinical Education) in Audiology; Curriculum (Academic and Clinical Education) in Speech-Language Pathology; Students; Assessment; and Program Resources.
- ◇ On-Site Team Report. In March 2011, the visiting team identified strengths and weaknesses. The visiting team determined that both programs were compliant in most areas; both programs were only partially compliant in one standard.
- ◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
  - ⇒ “Students and externship preceptors report the strength of the research opportunities that are available within this program. Students and externship praised the use of current evidence-based clinical practice. Students reported that even though many faculty are engaged in their own research, they are always accessible and willing to have students become involved in those research endeavors.
  - ⇒ Respect for an understanding of cultural and individual diversity is evidenced through the curriculum and policies and procedures, specifically in admissions, internal and external clinical placements, and retention of students.
  - ⇒ A strength is the availability of resources. Many of those resources are the result of grants obtained by the faculty. Other resources are made available through university funding. The computer labs and software available for academic, research, and clinical purposes are sufficient and current. Faculty felt, in most cases, that there was adequate funding for professional development activities, as well.

- ⇒ A strength is the availability of a wide range of clinical resources and materials.
- ⇒ The visiting team was impressed by the collegiality of the faculty, staff, and students and by the visionary nature of the program with respect to needs and development. The program outreach activities, such as the summer program in China and the service learning program in Columbus Junction, were seen as strengths.”

- ◇ Standard Partially in Compliance. (Changes implemented or planned by the College are identified in italics.)

Standard 4.2 – The program makes reasonable adaptations in curriculum, policies, and procedures to accommodate differences among individual students.

- ⇒ “The program does not have a policy regarding proficiency in English and/or other languages of service delivery or an essential functions document to address all other performance expectations at this time. According to the department chair, students with limited English proficiency are interviewed either in person or by phone prior to admission to either program. Students who need assistance to improve their English skills are referred to classes on campus for accent modification or in some cases, students with limited English proficiency obtain services within the Speech and Hearing Clinic to improve their listening and speaking skills in English. These policies are not clearly articulated in departmental materials such as student handbooks. Proficiencies required prior to the provision of clinical services are also not clearly identified.

*The programs have already begun to work on developing a policy related to English proficiency and all other performance expectations, and they expect to have it fully developed and implemented prior to the August 1, 2012 annual report deadline.*

- ◇ Accreditation Status. In August 2011, the Council on Academic Accreditation awarded accreditation to the Master of Arts Program in Speech-Language Pathology and the Doctor of Audiology Program in Audiology at the University of Iowa for the maximum period of eight years to 2019.

The first annual report must include an update regarding steps the program has taken to develop and implement a policy related to English proficiency and all other performance expectations. There are no other areas for follow-up.